

20 Prayers to Pray During This Pandemic

As COVID-19 sends the globe into crisis, it also sends us to our knees.

JEN POLLOCK MICHEL – MARCH 18, 2020

In recent days, as COVID-19 has been declared a global pandemic and countries have taken urgent measures to stem the spread of infection, I wish I could say that my first impulse has been to pray. It's probably more honest to say that I've obsessively refreshed my feeds.

The crisis is urgent, and I feel powerless. But perhaps feeling small is the best reminder to pray. Prayer is how we actively practice believing, so simply, so confidently, that God has the whole world in his hands. It's where we "let petitions and praises shape our worries into prayers, letting God know our concerns" (Phil. 4:6–7, *The Message*). Prayer is never the last resort of God's people. It is our first point of action.

With that in mind, I've put together a list of 20 prayers to pray during this pandemic. Each one addresses the specific needs of a specific community. I'm fortunate to be a part of a church with many medical professionals, some of whom gave me advice on how best to pray for them at this time. I've included their responses here. I've also tried to think broadly about how the rest of us are impacted by the current crisis.

This list isn't comprehensive, of course, but it's a good place to start. My hope is that it can provide words for us as we pray collectively (if also virtually!) as a church body. We believe there is a God who bends his ear to listen, and so we pray:

1. For the sick and infected: God, heal and help. Sustain bodies and spirits. Contain the spread of infection.
2. For our vulnerable populations: God, protect our elderly and those suffering from chronic disease. Provide for the poor, especially the uninsured.
3. For the young and the strong: God, give them the necessary caution to keep them from unwittingly spreading this disease. Inspire them to help.

4. For our local, state, and federal governments: God, help our elected officials as they allocate the necessary resources for combatting this pandemic. Help them to provide more tests.
5. For our scientific community, leading the charge to understand the disease and communicate its gravity: God, give them knowledge, wisdom, and a persuasive voice.
6. For the media, committed to providing up-to-date information: God, help them to communicate with appropriate seriousness without causing panic.
7. For consumers of media, looking to be well-informed: God, help us find the most helpful local information to equip us to be good neighbors. Keep us from anxiety and panic, and enable us to implement the recommended strategies, even at a cost to ourselves.
8. For those with mental health challenges who feel isolated, anxious, and helpless: God, provide them every necessary support.
9. For the homeless, unable to practice the protocols of social distancing in the shelter system: Protect them from disease, and provide isolation shelters in every city.
10. For international travelers stuck in foreign countries: God, help them return home safely and quickly.
11. For Christian missionaries throughout the world, especially in areas with high rates of infection: God, provide them with words of hope, and equip them to love and serve those around them.
12. For workers in a variety of industries facing layoffs and financial hardship: God, keep them from panic, and inspire your church to generously support them.
13. For families with young children at home for the foreseeable future: God, help mothers and fathers to partner together creatively for the care and flourishing of their children. For single mothers and fathers, grow their networks of support.

14. For parents who cannot stay home from work but must find care for their children: God, present them with creative solutions.

15. For those in need of regular therapies and treatments that must now be postponed: God, help them to stay patient and positive.

16. For business leaders making difficult decisions that affect the lives of their employees: God, give these women and men wisdom, and help them to lead self-sacrificially.

17. For pastors and church leaders faced with the challenges of social distancing: God, help them to creatively imagine how to pastor their congregants and love their cities well.

18. For college and university students, whose courses of study are changing, whose placements are canceled, whose graduation is uncertain: God, show them that while life is uncertain, their trust is in you.

19. For Christians in every neighborhood, community, and city: May your Holy Spirit inspire us to pray, to give, to love, to serve, and to proclaim the gospel, that the name of Jesus Christ might be glorified around the world.

20. For frontline health care workers, we thank you for their vocational call to serve us. We also pray:

- O God, keep them safe and healthy. Keep their families safe and healthy.
- O Lord, help them to be knowledgeable about the diagnosis and treatment of this disease, as well as the changing protocols.
- Heavenly Father, help them to stay clear-minded in the midst of the surrounding panic.
- God Most High, deliver them from anxiety for their own loved ones (aging parents, children, spouses, roommates).
- O Lord, our Lord, give them compassion for every patient in their care.
- Father God, provide for them financially, especially if they fall ill and are unable to work.
- Sovereign Lord, help Christians in health care to exhibit extraordinary peace, so that many would ask about the reason for their hope. Give them opportunities to proclaim the gospel. God, we trust that you are good and do good. Teach us to be your faithful people in this time of global crisis. Help us to follow in the footsteps of our faithful shepherd, Jesus, who laid down his life for the sake of love. Glorify his name as you equip us with everything needed for doing your will. In the name of Jesus we pray; Amen.

20 More Prayers to Pray **As We Approach the Pandemic's Peak**

Petitioning God is still the most powerful way to respond in crisis.

JEN POLLOCK MICHEL – APRIL 15, 2020

Last week, paramedics came for my elderly neighbor across the street as my kids and I watched helplessly from our front window. They donned masks and tied each others' long blue gowns closed. "Why is the fire truck here, too?" my son asked. "I think it always comes when an ambulance is called," I said, trying to be useful when in fact I felt useless.

With more than half the world under stay-at-home orders, many of us are experiencing this feeling of helplessness in the face of other people's suffering. Under normal conditions, there would be meals to make and hospital visits to pay. But these are not normal days.

And yet, we are not powerless. Not even close. One of the most effective things we can do for our neighbors the world over is to get down on our knees and reach out to God, the source of help itself.

I wrote "[20 Prayers to Pray During This Pandemic](#)" to remind us that God is who he says he is: "See now that I myself am he! There is no god besides me" (Deut. 32:39).

In the weeks since the publication of that piece, hundreds of thousands of people around the globe have been reading, praying (presumably), and also sharing those prayers—in seven languages. The numbers—encompassing more than 100 countries—pay tribute to how the church is coming together in crisis.

As we continue to join hands from a distance, here are 20 more prayers for our neighbors everywhere:

1. For the church, struggling with faith in the midst of global suffering: God, we believe in your willingness to heal and your power to do so. Help our unbelief.
2. For those who have turned to faith in Jesus for the very first time during this pandemic: God, help our new brothers and sisters grow in the grace and knowledge of our Savior.
3. For those who don't know Jesus yet but find their hearts stirred by spiritual curiosities and eternal longings: God, in your kindness, lead many to repentance and obedient faith in your Son.
4. For first responders and frontline health care workers, especially in epicenters of infection: God, reinforce their ranks and strengthen them with supernatural energy.
5. For companies with the ability (and the mandate) to manufacture much-needed protective equipment for our frontline health care workers: God, establish the work of their hands.
6. For transit workers, police officers, and other public servants working tirelessly, often without adequate protection: God, give them stamina every day and keep them from falling ill.
7. For nursing homes, rehabilitation centers, and other long-term care facilities: God, encourage the lonely residents and strengthen the staff members who help them. Prevent further spread of infection, and comfort families who can no longer visit their loved ones.
8. For the incarcerated, who are particularly vulnerable to the spread of this virus: God, give wisdom to prison officials. Protect inmates and staff from both violence and illness. Deliver them all from fear.
9. For women and children in abusive situations: God, restrain those who commit harm. Provide protection and rescue for victims and comfort them in their vulnerability.
10. For countries in the developing world: God, contain the spread of infection in our world's most densely populated and poorest cities. Spare countries already burdened with disease and chronic poor health.

11. For Asian Americans in the United States, Africans in China, and other people all over the world subjected to COVID-related racism: God, confront this evil with your swift justice, and deliver our brothers and sisters from cruelty.

12. For everyone anxious about the economic future—how they'll pay for housing, food, and essential medicines: God, connect them to sources of help through the church, the government, and the community. Enable them to look toward you for provision.

13. For small churches without cash reserves: God, keep their doors open, and urge your people to give generously.

14. For educators, forced to adapt curricula to online learning, and for students, forced to exercise more autonomy: God, make homes a place of curiosity, inquiry, and study. Give special help to children without regular access to the internet and other digital tools.

15. For those disappointed by the cancellation of milestone celebrations like graduations, weddings, or baby showers: God, comfort them in their disappointments, and make it possible for them to gather again with friends and family.

16. For expectant mothers, who face the prospect of labor and delivery without the support team they'd planned for: God, deliver them from fear, and fill them with joy as they witness new life.

17. For women facing unexpected pregnancy in this time of economic crisis: God, help them to find the practical and emotional support they need to keep them from seeking abortions.

18. For churches, parachurch ministries, and other Christian organizations doing online evangelism and discipleship: God, bless our imperfect digital efforts and continue to advance the kingdom of Jesus through your people.

19. For those dying alone in hospitals and for their loved ones: God, draw near to them and, by your mercy, let them encounter Christ, the friend who never leaves and never forsakes.

20. For those involved with politics at every level: God, help our leaders to work collaboratively and communicate efficiently, setting aside self-interest for the common good.

O Lord God, our heavenly Father, we acknowledge that you spoke the world into being and continue to sustain it with your Word. We trust in your wisdom, power, and goodness. Help us at every opportunity to love as you loved and to serve as you serve. Give us courage to speak of our hope in Jesus, who suffered for us, rose from the dead, and is coming again. Amen.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.